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THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM IN WASHOE COUNTY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA.

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THIS DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING IN THE WASHOE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA RESULTED FROM A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY AN EXPERIENCED LANGUAGE TEACHER. USING DATA GLEANED FROM QUESTIONNAIRES DISTRIBUTED TO THE UNIVERSITY FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDENTS AND INFORMATION GATHERED FROM CLASS VISITATIONS, CONFERENCES WITH ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS, ATTENDANCE AT DEPARTMENTAL MEETINGS, AND INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS AND STUDENTS, THE REPORT CONSIDERS AND ANALYZES SUCH SUBJECTS AS ENROLLMENT TRENDS, STUDY SEQUENCE, PROGRAM ARTICULATION, DROPOUTS, AND TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS. FOLLOWING AN EVALUATION OF ENROLLMENT, LANGUAGE LABORATORIES, AND MECHANICAL AIDS, THERE IS A DETAILED APPRAISAL OF THE EFFECTIVENESS, IN NEVADA SCHOOLS, OF THE AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD, INCLUDING AN EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF BASIC ISSUES AND SUGGESTED PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS. IN THE APPENDIXES ARE COPIES OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES, COMMENTS FROM UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, AND STATISTICS ABOUT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY. (AB)

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THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

IN

WASHOE COUNTY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA

A Survey

by

C. W. F. Melz

FL 000 366

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Reno, Nevada, May 1965

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PREFACE

This study was made possible through the generosity of the Board of Regents and the Administration of the University of Nevada in granting the author a sabbatical leave for the Fall of 1964, and a Humanities Committee of the DRI research grant.

Grateful acknowledgment is also made to the many persons who actively participated in this project: the Washoe County Schoolboard by opening the doors of the local high schools to the observer; the School Administrators of Washoe County who were ever willing to discuss and explain problems and situations arising from the study; Mr. Procter Hug, Superintendent of the Washoe County School District and his assistant, Mr. George Brighton; and Mr. Merlin D. Anderson, Consultant in Foreign Languages, Nevada State Department of Education. Very special praise is due to Mr. Marvin J. Roth, Curriculum Coordinator for the junior and senior high schools, who not only provided class schedules, road maps and information about teachers, but personally introduced the author to all school administrators and foreign language teachers of the district and who generously made time for weekly conferences during the survey. In addition, sincere appreciation is expressed to the teachers who were most cooperative in permitting the observer to visit their classes and discussing pedagogical matters with him.

Last, but not least, the instructors and students of the Foreign Language Department at the University of Nevada, proved to be of great assistance. The staff members graciously distributed the author's questionnaire to their students who, in turn, furnished valuable information by filling out the forms. Furthermore, the author feels greatly indebted to his colleagues for giving him progress reports on individual students and by discussing essential parts of the survey with him.

Thus, this study is the result of the cooperative effort of many persons whose contributions the author values very highly. It is true, however, that in collecting and sifting the material and in listening carefully to many diverse opinions, he came to definite conclusions of his own.

Since he undertook this project solely out of professional interest - he has been a teacher of languages for almost forty years, twenty-four of them at the University of Nevada -

his role was that of an interested observer and not that of an official investigator. Yet, a merely objective description of the foreign language program in this region would be only of statistical value and largely meaningless if not followed by interpretations and conclusions. Therefore, the author will take the liberty of offering a number of suggestions which might lead to improvements.

C. W. F. Melz
Dept. of Foreign Languages
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May 1965

I PURPOSE

Ever since the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) started a nationwide Foreign Language Program in 1952, which culminated in the inclusion of foreign languages in the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958, the teaching and study of foreign languages in the schools and colleges of this country has undergone a radical change. Where formerly in high schools a meager program of a two-year sequence in foreign languages was offered which supposedly led to a reading knowledge and which by many educators was justly regarded as a waste of time, the new direction demanded that the teaching of foreign languages begin in elementary schools (FLES) with emphasis on the spoken language and with much longer sequences of study provided for. This caused a great deal of experimentation in the search for proper materials and modern methods and techniques in language teaching. The usefulness of language laboratories became established; the science of linguistics was employed; the so-called audiolingual method evolved; the upgrading of foreign language teachers in NDEA institutes supported by the national government began in 1959 and has been continued and vastly enlarged ever since.

Many millions of dollars have been spent on the improvement of foreign language instruction in the U.S.A. for the last seven years. The question now arises what effect all this has had on the teaching of foreign languages in our schools and universities. Since there is a large variety of educational programs according to states, counties and institutions, it would be a tremendous job to present even a fairly accurate picture of the language situation on a nationwide scale. To be sure, the Foreign Language Research Center sponsored by the MLA is constantly gathering statistics about enrollments and expansions of foreign language programs, but the rapid development and yearly increase of overall enrollment makes up-to-date statistics almost impossible. Also, even if such statistics were obtainable every year, they would not reveal anything about the quality of instruction or the effectiveness of the new method.

For instance, the ever increasing number of language laboratories may be determined statistically but their effective use eludes determination. After all, the important

processes of language instruction and learning take place in the classroom and the laboratory. Therefore, any qualitative evaluation must be based on observation of classroom performances. For this reason the author resolved to visit as many language classes as he possibly could within the short time available to him, and since extensive travel even within his own state, Nevada, would have been costly and time-consuming, he restricted his visits to the local district of Washoe County and the University of Nevada. His purpose was to gain an accurate picture of the present foreign language program in this region.

This picture should show whether or not a planned program is now in force, which would provide the necessary opportunities for language students to progress from the lowest level to the highest without loss of time.

An important aspect of the program is the proper placement of freshmen entering with H.S. language preparation from one to four or more years in college language classes. The proper preparation and training of foreign language teachers is perhaps the most fundamental problem.

The present study attempts to give a detailed analysis of the important aspects of language learning and teaching in the Washoe County public schools and the University of Nevada at Reno. The study of a limited area does not allow general conclusions to be drawn as to the language situation in the State of Nevada or the entire United States. Yet it might reveal a typical situation which might exist in many other school districts all over the country.

II PROCEDURE

1. Conferences

Even before the school semester started many hours were spent in conferences with top school administrators: Mr. Proctor Hug, Superintendent of Washoe County Schools and his assistants, Mr. George Brighton and Mr. Marvin J. Roth. In addition the principals of the ten public high schools were interviewed.

Group conferences with foreign language teachers in each school were used to explain the purpose of the survey and to stress the role of the author as that of a mere observer. Weekly discussions with Mr. Roth, the coordinator for junior and senior high schools proved to be most illuminating.

The Foreign Language Consultant of the Nevada State Department of Education, Mr. Merlin D. Anderson, was interviewed. Informal discussions with staff members of the Foreign Language Department, University of Nevada, and especially with Dr. Charles V. Wells, Chairman of the Department, yielded much useful information. Regular attendance at departmental meetings throughout the Fall semester kept the author informed about intended changes in the curriculum and enabled him to present his ideas to the entire department.

In a few instances, parents of language students in high school were asked about their impression of the F.L. program. Former students now teaching languages in the local schools were prompted to comment on the preparation they had received at the University. University students' opinions were solicited on several aspects.

2. Class visits

Foreign languages classes in all ten schools and the University were visited. Instruction in French, German, Spanish, and Russian was observed. Some classes were visited repeatedly. In the public schools 37 classes and 30 individual teachers were observed, among them two student teachers. At the university level, five instructors in five classes were visited.

3. Questionnaires

Two sets of questionnaires were distributed. The first was handed to all students in foreign language classes at the University (see Appendix A), 660 were returned. They yielded valuable information about the student's high school language instruction and provided facts and figures for statistics which have never before been available in this form. The analysis of these questionnaires was time-consuming but proved to be most helpful in describing the language situation.

The second set concerned the background of the forty FL teachers in Washoe County. This was made up by Mr. Roth at the suggestion of the author who tabulated the answers. (See Appendix B)

4. Statistics

Figures on enrollment provided by Mr. Roth and Dr. Charles V. Wells, Chairman of the Foreign Language Department at the University and the answers furnished by the questionnaires were tabulated, analyzed and compared with national figures whenever possible.

III THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF WASHOE COUNTY

Washoe County, Nevada, has now about 125,000 inhabitants and is rapidly growing in population. The cities of Reno and Sparks are the major centers in the county.

Since there is no foreign language instruction in the elementary schools, the discussion will deal with ten schools only, seven junior and three senior high schools.

The following four tables will give the total enrollment figures and percentages for individual languages.

It should be noted that French, German and Spanish are taught in each of the ten high schools (see Tables 2, 3, 4). Instruction in these three languages starting in the seventh grade has been offered as a pilot program in one junior high school only since last year. A plan to teach French, German and Spanish in all schools in the seventh grade is now being proposed by the school administration.

Latin is offered only in the three senior high schools. Italian and Russian are taught each in one school (see Tables 2 and 3).

Third-year instruction is given in French, Russian and Spanish. There are only two fourth-year classes in two languages, French and Spanish (see Table 3).

The small enrollment in the third and fourth year demonstrates that Washoe County schools still maintain a two-year FL program for the majority of the students.

The larger enrollment in the second year (see Table 3) compared with the first year is explained by the Level I figures in Table 4.

Attention is called to the fact that the study of foreign languages in Washoe County schools is not compulsory and that seventh and eighth graders are selected for FL classes on the basis of their reading ability in English.

Table 1

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENROLLMENTS IN THE TOTAL ENROLLMENTS OF WASHOE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, FALL, 1964.

		FL Enrollment	FL % of Total
Total Enrollment in Sr. H.S.	4628	1293	27
Total Enrollment in Jr. H.S.	8197	1463	17
Total H.S. Enrollment	12,825	2756	21
All Public Schools	25,200	2756	10.9

Table 2

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGES AND THE PERCENTAGES THEY REPRESENT OF THE TOTAL FL ENROLLMENT IN WASHOE COUNTY PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS, FALL, 1964.

Language	No. of Students	Per Cent of Total
French	875	31.8
German	506	18.3
Italian	57	2.-
Latin	111	4.-
Russian	17	-.6
Spanish	1190	43.2
Total	2756	

Table 3

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENROLLMENT IN THE THREE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS OF WASHOE COUNTY, FALL, 1964.

Language	1st Yr.	2nd Yr.	3rd Yr.	4th Yr.	Total	No. of Classes	Average Class Size
French	105	219	79	8	411	21	19.5
German	79	59			138	7	19.7
Italian	43	14			57	3	19.-
Latin	14	97			111	6	18.5
Russian	6	7	4		17	3	5.7
Spanish	170	201	59	29	559	27	20.7
Total	417	697	142	37	1293	67	19.3

Table 4

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENROLLMENT IN THE SEVEN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS OF WASHOE COUNTY, FALL, 1964.

Language	Level I (1st year)		Level I	Level II (2nd year)	Total	No. of Classes	Average Class Size
	7th Gr.	8th Gr.	9th Gr.	9th Gr.			
French	27	204	210	23	464	26	17.8
German	22	165	181		368	20	18.4
Spanish	31	233	343	24	631	29	21.8
Total	80	602	734	47	1463	75	19.5

It might be illuminating to take a look at the FL program in Washoe County as it was ten years ago. At that time there were only two four-year high schools in this district, Reno High and Sparks High. The junior high schools were formed later on. Table 5 shows the total enrollment in FLs in the two high schools in Fall, 1954.

It will be of interest to compare figures and percentages shown here with those of Tables 1 and 2. Conspicuous is the drop in Latin from 25.9% of the total FL enrollment to 4% at the present time. It is explained by the spectacular increase in the German enrollment from almost nothing to 18.3% of the total. The study of German has largely replaced the study of Latin.

The Spanish enrollment has remained fairly static. The French enrollment from 18.5% to 31.8% may also be explained by the emphasis on modern language study and the disinterest in Latin. The interest in Italian seems to have remained on the same level. There was no program in Russian offered 10 years ago.

It should be emphasized that the 1954 program in all languages consisted of a two-year sequence only.

Table 5

ENROLLMENT IN FIS IN THE TWO WASHOE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOLS, FALL, 1954.

	Latin	French	German	Italian	Spanish	Total FLs	Total School
Reno High	123	102	16	32	224	497	1693
Sparks High	60	29		22	97	208	542
Total	183	131	16	54	321	705	2235
% of total school enrollment	8%	5.8%	0.7%	2.4%	14.3%	31%	
% of total FL enrollment	25.9%	18.5%	2.1%	7.6%	45.5%		

A recent report on FL enrollment in public secondary schools throughout the U.S.[1] makes it possible to compare the local figures and percentages with the national ones. It will be noted that the report includes the figures for Fall, 1963, so that there is a year's difference in our comparison. The report contains the following highlights.

> From the fall of 1958 to the fall of 1963, HS enrollments (grades 9-12) increased 36.1%, FL enrollments increased 80.9%, and modern FL enrollments increased 114.6%.
>
> In the fall of 1963, almost 3 1/2 million students in HS were enrolled in FL courses, almost a third of the total HS population; in 1958 the 2 million FL enrollment represented only a fourth of the total HS population for that year.
>
> Enrollments for the fall of 1963 in modern FLs equaled 80.3% of the total FL enrollment, or 25.9% of the total HS population. Spanish and French enrollments combined comprised almost 90% of the total modern FL enrollment.
>
> Enrollments in all languages except Latin and Ancient Greek were at an all-time peak in the fall of 1963. For the first time in 6 years, Latin enrollments showed a decrease. In the fall of 1963, Latin enrollments equaled 19.6% of the total FL enrollment; in 1958 they equaled 32.3% of the total FL enrollment.
>
> In fall 1963, a higher % of FL students continued study into the third year than at any time in the preceding 6 years. In 1963, 39.1% of modern FL students continued into the third year, compared to 25.7% in 1958: 17.4% of the Latin students continued into the third year, the same as in 1958.
>
> By fall 1963, 79.4% of the nation's public HSs offered FL instruction as contrasted with 74.9% in 1962 and 61.6% in 1958. (Texas Foreign Language Association Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 2, April, 1965.)

1. James N. Eshelman and James F. Dershem, Offerings and Enrollments in Public Secondary Schools, Fall 1963. Prepared by contract with the USOE (OE 4-14-037) and published by the MLA. Copies of the complete survey (45 pp.) may be obtained by sending $1.00 to the MLA Materials Center, 4 Washington Place, New York, New York 10003.

How does the present local language program fit into the general situation described above? Table 6 shows clearly that it is far below the national average of a year ago, which by now might even be higher.

Table 6

PERCENTAGES OF FL ENROLLMENT IN THE U.S.A. COMPARED WITH THOSE IN THE WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

U.S.A. All Secondary Public Schools		Washoe County, Nevada All Secondary Public Schools	
	% of Foreign Language Enrollment of Total Enrollment		
Fall, 1958	(about) 24%	Fall, 1954 (see Table 5)	31%
Fall, 1963	(about) 32%	Fall, 1964 (see Table 1)	21 %
	Modern Foreign Language Study Continued in Third Year		
Fall, 1963	39%	Fall, 1964 (see Table 3)	12%

The great waste in time and energy of a two-year language program in high school has been pointed out very often in the last twelve years. Foreign language teachers on all levels have been painfully aware of this for a long time. Indeed, the short time allowed for the study of foreign languages was justly denounced as one of the greatest shortcomings of the American High School by Dr. James B. Conant in his famous survey of 1958.[2] He recommended the following.

> The school board should be ready to offer a third and fourth year of a foreign language, no matter how few students enroll. The guidance officers should urge the completion of a four-year sequence of <u>one</u> foreign language if the student demonstrates ability in handling foreign languages.

It might be argued that a two-year preparation in high school does not mean the termination of foreign language studies for the college-bound high school graduates who have repre-

2. James B. Conant, <u>The American High School Today</u>, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959, 69.

sented at least one half of the graduating class from local schools for a number of years. The University of Nevada has steadily recognized high school preparation in foreign languages by counting one year of H.S. language as the equivalent of one semester of college for completing the FL requirement. A student entering the University with two years of H.S. foreign language would normally be placed in a third-semester course and could complete in his freshman year the 16 FL credits required by the College of Arts and Science and some programs in the other colleges at the University. Thus, in theory there exists a unified program shared by the schools and the University. The author remembers a number of good, even excellent students, especially from the local high schools, who had little or no trouble in continuing with their H.S. foreign language in college classes. Unfortunately there are not enough of them. Since no previous data were available about the group that discontinued their H.S. language in college, thus largely wasting their own and their teachers' valuable time, an important part of this survey consists in ascertaining such data. The questionnaire distributed to all students now studying foreign languages at the University of Nevada was returned by 660 individuals representing an estimated 90% of the total student enrollment in the Foreign Language Department. The fact that this group is only a fraction of the total University enrollment of 3,557 at the present time does not permit the author to draw general conclusions. Yet he thinks that the data gathered from the answers spotlight the general situation in question. It should also be pointed out that in this group of 660 students, one third are graduates of Washoe County schools and about two thirds come from the entire state of Nevada. Within these limitations the results of the questionnaire as they are shown in the following tables may be regarded as significant for our problem.

Table 7

HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES ACCORDING TO YEARS OF STUDY OF 660 STUDENTS AT THE FL DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO, FALL, 1964.

No H.S. Language 79

	1/2 year	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	Total
French	1	37	94	45	19	136
Gaelic		1				1
German	3	20	14	4		41
Greek		1	2			3
Italian	1	7	5	2		15
Japanese				1		1
Latin	4	75	104	10	4	197
Russian			2			2
Spanish	5	67	180	30	18	300
Total	14	208	401	92	41	756▼

▼ 175 students studied 2 languages in high school.

In Table 7 the group with no H.S. language represents 11.9%.

One third of the students completely wasted their time in studying a language for half a year or one year only. 60% studied a language two years, 13.9% three years, and only 6.3% four years.

Table 8

NUMBER OF STUDENTS CONTINUING OR DISCONTINUING WITH THEIR HIGH SCHOOL LANGUAGES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, FALL, 1964.

Continuing	Discontinuing	Repeating
245	266	37

The number of students not continuing with their H.S. language is larger than that of those continuing. According to Table 7 the latter group should at least be double in number with a H.S. language of two or more years. The repeaters started the H.S. language over again.

Most of them had only one year of it.

Table 9

REASONS FOR NOT CONTINUING H.S. LANGUAGE AND FOR STARTING A NEW LANGUAGE IN COLLEGE

New Language Preferred	Poor Preparation	H.S. Language Disliked	Time Lapse	New Language Required	Schedule Difficulties	Total
101	55	41	37	27	5	266

The major reason given for not continuing with the H.S. language is the desire to study a new language. Most of the students expressing this reason had Latin in H.S. and wished to learn a modern language. Those that disliked the H.S. language did not necessarily dislike the teacher, as can be seen from their comments.

The comparatively small number that stated the time lapse between H.S. and University as their reason is surprising. It must be, however, kept in mind that a fair number of those continuing with the H.S. language had also a time lapse, usually of one year.

A special study was made of the success of all freshmen in second year or advanced language classes during the Fall semester of 1964. The results are represented in Table 10.

There are several points of interest in this table: ~~first~~ the high percentage of A's and B's as mid-semester and final grades, 54% and 55%; second, the few failures and withdrawals; third, the improvement made by the poorer (D) students during the last part of the semester. Since 41.6% of this group came from Washoe County schools, the local FL teachers may justly claim a good part of the credit for the achievement of their former students. It should also be noted that 15 students in second-year classes, 11 in French and 4 in Spanish had a three-year H.S. preparation and should have taken the second-semester course of the second college year. This course, however, was not offered in the Fall so that the students either had to wait until Spring to follow the proper sequence in their language study or forego the credit for their third-year H.S. language and take the Fall semester course of the second college year. The fault here lies with the Foreign Language Department at the University in not providing the opportunity for continuing the H.S. language without a semester's break.

TABLE 10

FRESHMEN IN SECOND-YEAR AND ADVANCED LANGUAGE CLASSES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO, FALL, 1964. DISTRIBUTION OF MID-SEMESTER AND FINAL GRADES.

GRADES	A		B		C		D		F		W		No. of College Instruct. Concerned	Frehsmen from Washoe County Schools
	Mid-Sem.	Final	Mid-Sem.	Final	Mid-Sem.	Final	Mid-Sem.	Final	Mid-Sem.	Final	Final	Total		
French 2nd yr.														
(2 yr. H.S.)	2	2	10	7	6	11	5			2	1	23	3	11
(3 yr. H.S.)	2	2	5	6	2	2	2	1				11	3	1
French 3rd yr.														
(4 yr. H.S.)	1	2	2	1	1	1						4	2	1
German 2nd yr.														
(2 yr. H.S.)	2	2	1	4	3	1	2	1				8	1	6
Italian 2nd yr.														
(2 yr. H.S.)			1		1	3	1					3	1	3
Spanish 2nd yr.														
(2 yr. H.S.)	2	4	15	14	11	10	5	4	2	3		35	3	13
(3 yr. H.S.)	1	1	1	1	2	2						4	3	1
Spanish 3rd yr.														
(4 yr. H.S.)		1	7	6	1					1		8	1	4
Totals	10	14	42	39	27	30	15	6	2	6	1	96		40 or 41.6%

It is to be expected that in the near future the number of freshmen entering the University from local schools with a three-year preparation in H.S. foreign languages will be much larger. Last Fall, the Washoe County School Administration, realizing the shortcomings of the present FL program, had authorized the newly appointed coordinator for the junior and senior high schools, Mr. Marvin J. Roth, to devise a new improved program. Mr. Roth, a veteran foreign language teacher and excellent organizer, worked out a plan which has been approved by the administration and which will be in effect in September, 1965. It consists of two programs of language instruction, a six-year sequence from grade 7 through grade 12 for French, German, and Spanish and a three-year sequence from grade 10 to grade 12 for the same languages plus Italian, Latin and Russian.

His master plan provides for a five-year transition period to start the new programs and terminate the existing ones. He has also produced a guide for teachers which contains instructions about methods, materials, and aims to be reached at each level. This plan, if carried out properly, should vastly improve the FL program in Washoe County.

The question is, how will the Foreign Language Department at the University of Nevada meet the challenge of better trained freshmen in foreign languages? This will be discussed in a later part of this report.

For the successful implementation of the new program the following suggestions are offered.

1. The new program of foreign language study in Washoe County public schools should be widely publicized on radio and television programs, in newspaper articles and P-TA meetings. Public support is needed to carry it out.
2. Since students have no choice of their senior high school, the attempt should be made to offer equal opportunities for studying foreign languages in the three senior high schools, Italian and Russian courses should not be confined each to one school.
3. The counsellors in all schools should urge interested students to take one foreign language for at least three years. Talented students in the six-year program should be advised to study a second foreign language in grades 10-12.

4. With the necessarily larger number of FL classes in the new program, more teachers will be needed. Qualified FL teachers should be given a full-time program in teaching foreign languages.

5. The carefully integrated new program demands a tighter organisation of FL teachers within the individual schools than is now in existence. The chairmen of FL departments should call frequent meetings to coordinate class work properly.
   In the junior high schools where there are no chairmen appointed at the present time, a member of the FL teaching staff or an administrator with experience in FL instruction should be put in charge of the FL program in the school.

6. An effort should be made to limit class sizes to twenty students. The Modern Language Association recommends 15 students as the maximum number in FL classes.

IV THE TEACHERS

What kind of teachers are in charge of foreign language instruction in Washoe County schools? The following tables will give factual information concerning them, which the teachers furnished in their answers to a questionnaire. (see Appendix B)

Table 11

SEX DISTRIBUTION OF FL TEACHERS IN WASHOE COUNTY

	Female	Male	Total
Senior High School	11	6	17
Junior High School	11	12	23
Total	22	18	40

Table 12

YEARS OF FL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1-3 years	4-6 years	7-12 years	15-32 years	Total
22	11	3	4	40

Table 13

ACADEMIC UNDERGRADUATE PREPARATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES OF FL TEACHERS IN WASHOE COUNTY

Minor only	Major only	Major and Minor	Total
12	17	11	40

Table 14

GRADUATE CREDIT HOURS EARNED BY FL TEACHERS IN WASHOE COUNTY

CREDITS:	No Grad.	3-8	10-20	24-30	over 30
	14 or 35%	9	9	4	4

Table 15

PARTICIPATION IN NDEA INSTITUTES BY FL TEACHERS FROM WASHOE COUNTY

Summer Inst. 1st level	Summer Inst. 1st & 2nd level	Academic year Inst.	Instructor at Inst.	Employed by Inst.
11	3	2	2	2

No Participation	Intend to apply in 1965
20 or 50%	11

Table 16

WASHOE COUNTY FL TEACHERS WITH NATIVE OR NEAR-NATIVE ABILITY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

German	French	Italian	Spanish	Total
5	4	2	9	20 or 50%

Table 17

TRAVEL, RESIDENCE, AND STUDY IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES OF WASHOE COUNTY FL TEACHERS

No Travel	6 weeks to 4 months	9 months to 2 years	3 to 6 years	10 years and more
11 or 27.5%	8,	11	6	4

Table 18

NUMBER OF LANGUAGES TAUGHT BY INDIVIDUALS IN WASHOE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

	One Language	Two Languages	Three Languages	Total
Sr. H.S.	11	5	1	17
Jr. H.S.	20	3	-	23

Table 19

DAILY TEACHING LOAD OF WASHOE COUNTY FL TEACHERS IN NUMBER OF CLASSES

	1 Class	2 Classes	3 Classes	4 Classes	5 Classes	Total
Sr. H.S.	2	2	2	1	10	17
Jr. H.S.	4	3	5	6	5	23

A summary of Tables 11-19 will reveal that the group of forty FL teachers shows some strongly desirable features. There is an almost equal distribution between women and men; it is predominantly a group of young people; a good majority has a college major in foreign languages; one-half of the group have had NDEA institute training; 50% may be rated as native or near-native speakers; most of them have been abroad. The weaker features are the definite lack of graduate studies and the fact that only twenty-two out of forty have a nearly full-time teaching load in foreign languages.

These statistics, however, do not give the whole picture. Through personal contact and observation the author vividly remembers the group as being composed of real people and not statistical figures. Most of his visits to classrooms were enjoyable experiences and many conversations with the teachers proved to be illuminating and stimulating to him. He found that most of the local FL teachers are genuinely interested in teaching languages; that there exists a friendly relationship between them and their students; that they prepare their work conscientiously day by day; that they create a class atmosphere conducive to learning; and that their teaching shows good results.

If the following suggestions imply criticism of certain aspects in the teachers' attitude, it is hoped that they will be understood as essentially friendly advice.

1. Since there seems to be little communication between the FL teachers teaching in the same school, they should insist on regular weekly or bi-weekly department meetings for the purpose of discussing the common class problems and coordinating progress. They might persuade the school administration to arrange their schedules in such a way that most, if not all of them, share the same preparation period for meetings.

2. Teachers should be more tolerant. They profess to teach the living language but reject acceptable pronunciations - i.e. Castilian Spanish - and willfully substitute important cultural patterns such as the familiar forms of address with standard formal forms of address. This oversimplification of the language is arbitrary and not in the interest of learning a "living language".

3. Teachers should improve their own language skills. Even native speakers run the

danger of using English language patterns in their native speech if not constantly on guard against it. Extensive reading in the language they are teaching should be a part of their recreation. Listening to practice tapes and frequently recording their own voice will lead to improvement.

4. Teachers should join the national organisations in their special field. The American associations of language teachers publish periodicals of high quality. Many teachers complain that the articles in the professional magazines are too scholarly to be of use to them for their teaching experience. This criticism is not valid. In the first place, these magazines contain a wealth of information about new teaching materials, experiments, methods and important news from the national level in the field of languages. It is absolutely necessary that the language teacher be constantly reminded that he plays an important part in carrying out a nation-wide program. In the second place, as a college graduate, the teacher should, to some extent, cultivate scholarly interests in order to widen his horizon and to avoid the danger of intellectual stagnation.

5. Teachers should show more interest in the graduate program offered by the Foreign Language Department of the University of Nevada. During the last two years a few graduate courses in German and Spanish have been scheduled in the late afternoon mostly for the convenience of local teachers, but very few of them took advantage of this opportunity. Since the FL Department is under-staffed it could ill afford to offer these courses and may have to abandon them for lack of enrollment.

V THE METHOD

During one of his visits the observer was asked by a teacher whether the real purpose of his survey was to appraise the effectiveness of the new method. He had to confess that this was one of his main aims.

It should be made clear that the audiolingual method has been introduced into many schools and colleges, but that there is still a substantial number of traditional teachers opposing the new approach to language learning. The NDEA institutes have been retraining language teachers in the new method; more than half of all the FL teachers in the country were participants in these institutes and are largely following the new direction in language teaching. A method depends a good deal on the teaching and learning materials used, but not entirely so. It is the teacher, after all, who uses the method and will vary it according to his personal inclinations and individuality. If he accepts it as a set of rules to be followed mechanically, he ceases to be creative and stimulating, and his students will go through the motions without enthusiasm. This is the case with any method. It is therefore wrong to condemn a new method because it is mechanically applied.

The audiolingual approach is easily misunderstood as an incessant oral drill consisting of repetitions in chorus of speech patterns in the foreign language, varied only by the recital of memorized dialogs. As a matter of fact, the new method is based on the principle that learning a new language is primarily learning new skills with well-defined steps of progress. The four basic skills to be acquired through constant practice are oral comprehension or listening and understanding, speaking, reading, and finally writing. This is the natural way in which every person has learned his native language, which is in sharp contrast to the way in which languages have been taught in schools traditionally; where reading and writing came first and oral comprehension and speaking last, if ever.

The audiolingual method does not permit a teacher to talk about the foreign language in English, i.e. to give lengthy explanations about grammar. Yet grammar is taught by means of pattern drills. The recognition that each language possesses its own peculiar speech patterns which must be practised before mastery of a language can be achieved, led to the development

of a great variety of exercises, usually referred to as pattern drills. They are carefully structured and demand constant practice over a period of years. After the practice of a set of these drills, explanations-as much as possible in the foreign language-are given about their place within the structure of the language. This is teaching grammar in the modern way.

The mainstay of a modern language class is the dialog. By means of dialogs about real life situations, such as "Lunch-time", "Before School", "A Trip to Town", the living language is learned in small sections. The dialogs are practised in chorus, memorized, and then dramatized, usually by individuals. The audio-lingual approach requires a tremendous effort and control from the teacher. He is the model for sounds and actions, he is supposed to master the language, to be thoroughly trained in modern teaching techniques which require him to be an able chorus leader, stimulating stage manager and actor in order to keep the class alive and learning. He has at his disposal more effective mechanical aids than ever before in the history of language teaching: the record player and tape recorder, the language laboratory.

About two years ago, the Venice County schools adopted, for all modern languages, the newest and best language materials on the market; the A-LM, produced by Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965. The three senior high schools in the district possess a language lab and the junior high school's language classes have tape recorders and record players at their disposal.

Since only one half of the FL teachers in this district were trained by NDEA institutes, the other half had to learn how to teach the audiolingual way. Some of them were, and still are, very critical of the new method and the new materials. It should be said here, emphatically, that institute training can not convert a weak teacher into a strong one and that a traditional teacher is not automatically a poor teacher. But the weak traditional teacher may improve through thorough training in modern techniques and the effective traditional teacher will have employed consciously or instinctively quite a number of the devices advocated by the audiolinguists.

To what extent is the new method and laboratory practice followed in our schools? A partial answer may be found in Table 20.

Table 20

NUMBER OF STUDENTS TAUGHT BY THE AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD IN HIGH SCHOOL. NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO HAD H.S. LANGUAGE LAB AVAILABLE. AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS OF LAB PRACTICE. USE OF MECHANICAL AIDS IN CLASSROOMS. (From 581 students at the FL Department, University of Nevada, Fall, 1964.)

Audiolingual method used	No. of students with H.S. language lab.	No. of students with regular lab practice 1 hr. or more per week.	No. of students with use of phonograph and tape recorder in classroom instruction
209	238	150	109
36%	41%	25%	19%

It must be remembered that 79 of the 660 language students returning the questionnaire (see Appendix A) had no H.S. language, hence the figure 581 (see Table 7). Also, that one third of the 660 students came from Washoe County. It may be reasonable to assume that Table 20 reflects the situation now existing in this district.

The following facts are significant. Although 36% profess to have been taught by the audiolingual method, 41% had a language laboratory available in their schools and only 25% had regular lab practice. The smallest number, 19%, saw standard class equipment, the tape recorder and phonograph, employed in language instruction. The conclusions to be drawn from these facts are that the audiolingual method was not carried out in the most effective manner and that expensive equipment in classrooms and laboratories, most of the time, is silently gathering dust. No wonder that one high school principal seriously considers giving away his laboratory to another school to gain valuable classroom space.

It is true that in the three senior H.S. lab schedules are made up to allow practice for every first and second-year language class. Yet, general use of the lab was noticed in only one senior H.S. The material to be found in the high school language laboratories consists mainly of practice tapes and records. For lack of advanced material there is little inducement for teachers of third and fourth-year language classes to take their students to the lab. Furthermore, some teachers shy away from handling mechanical equipment because they have little or no training for it or do not like to bother with it. A straw vote taken among junior H.S.

language teachers revealed that one half of them would like to have a lab installed in their school; the other half did not think it necessary.

What do students now in college foreign language classes think of their language instruction in high school? Since they have now a better perspective and a better means of comparison, their opinions have great value. An overall estimate of high school language teaching is shown in Table 21.

Table 21

RATING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN HIGH SCHOOL BY 581 STUDENTS AT THE FL DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA FALL, 1964. (43 rated instruction in two classes differently)

Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
146	192	190	96
	54.3%	30.4%	15.3%

The above rating is essentially a rating of teachers and as such presents a favorable picture of the quality of FL instruction in high school. There is a definite correlation between the 15.3% of poor instruction in Table 21 and poor preparation as a reason for not continuing with the H.S. language in college (see Table 9). Since not all of the students explained their ratings, the comments listed in Appendix C contain more criticism than praise of their H.S. instruction in foreign languages. It must be said, however, that the comments were selected for their constructive value. They illuminate the language situation both in the schools and in college and largely confirm the author's opinion gained by his own experience and observations.

The following discussion is therefore based on the observer's judgment and the student comments presented in Appendix C. A perusal of these comments will at once point out the dilemma of the FL student in the present period of transition between the old and new method, between his varied language experiences in high school and his no less varied experiences in college language classes. How great is his dilemma? A glance at Tables 21 and 10 may be reassuring as to the quality of FL instruction in high school and the success of freshmen in

advanced college language classes. Yet, there are many problems to be solved because of the differences in emphasis and attitudes between high school and college in regard to FL instruction.

At the present time the main reason for the FL student's dilemma is perhaps the short two-year H.S. language program. With longer sequences provided in the near future, the graduates from local high schools will face fewer difficulties in continuing their FL studies at the university. Some obstacles, however, will always be present. These could, and should, be mostly removed by an improved cooperation between the schools and the university. To this end the following points will be discussed.

It must be stressed that it is not the author's intention to refer to any school or individual in particular, nor will he quote individual student comments as evidence. It is rather the sum total of all factors concerned which will enable him to discuss basic issues.

1. Regardless of differences in methods and approaches, there must be an agreement as to the aims of FL instruction on the various levels.

High school and college FL teachers must recognize that at the present time the objective of attaining a "reading" knowledge in foreign languages has mainly been replaced by the demand for proficiency in the four language skills.

2. The traditional equation of one year high school FL with one semester college FL has been a myth created in registrar offices. The difference in the age of the students and the slow pace of H.S. instruction compared with the accelerated tempo in college courses make it nearly impossible for the individual with only one year H.S. language to continue in college. This has little to do with the change in methods. The FL Department at the University of Nevada should use placement tests to avoid hardship to students not well enough prepared for a second-year or advanced class as well as to prevent the lowering of standards in college courses. High school grades may also be a factor in placing students properly.

3. For the larger number of students entering the university in the near future with a three-year H.S. preparation in FLs, the University FL Department will offer the proper sequence, i.e., a fourth-semester course in the Fall as well as in the Spring semester. Next Fall a special section in French and Spanish each will be set up for incoming freshmen with

this preparation. It is strongly suggested that these sections be regarded as a means to bridge the gap between high school and college and not as an automatic continuation of the third-semester college language.

4. The University FL Department proposes to designate certain courses open to freshmen entering with four or more years in a high school language. These courses are Intermediate Composition and Conversation and The General Survey of Literature in the respective languages. Since these are year courses, carrying three credits per semester each, the entering freshman interested in languages will have ample opportunity to continue his studies without trouble. After one year of these general studies, the students will be more usedto college work and will be better able to undertake more specialized studies in languages. It is, however, suggested that the University FL Department carefully delineate the contents, scopes, and methods for these courses. The same should be done for all first and second-year courses.

5. The audiolingual method has been severely critized. The main points in question will be taken up as follows.

a. It is too mechanical and does not lay a solid foundation for further study by neglecting the study of formal grammar, reading and writing.

This criticism is really not directed towards the method, but its imperfect application and the material used. A difference in teaching approach should be made judiciously as to the age group concerned. The enthusiastic voices of the seventh and eighth graders reciting readily in French, German and Spanish grow fainter and even bored in the higher grades. Sophistication, self-consciousness and a more analytical attitude of the older students hamper the teacher's effort to go through all the steps he finds prescribed to reach the goal. The best starting point for learning languages is in the lower grades, and the lower the better. A six-year old child has a better capacity of hearing and imitating without hesitation any sound than a teen-ager. The teenagers and college students are used to reading and writing. If largely confined to the world of sounds in a foreign language class, they feel treated as children and become frustrated. The eternal pattern drill bores them, they want to ask questions, receive explanations, be stimulated intellectually by tidbits of

cultural information and esthetically by poems and selections from literature. But the teacher must go through his drills, the method demands it. There is little, if any, time for such "frills".

The attempt should be made to adapt the method to the age group taught. Reading and writing may be introduced earlier in the tenth grade than in the seventh. Additional reading material should be used and more written homework be assigned to the older children.

b. The audiolingual method tends to creat an impersonal learning atmosphere and does not encourage individual efforts.

In fact, this is the main impression gained from observing class instruction most of the time. The teacher seems to be constantly directing the class. In practicing the dialog, he demands group recitation; in drilling patterns, group recitation; in asking for immediate response, again it is mostly group response. This procedure is of course essential, it is the very backbone of the method, but if there is little or no stimulation for individual efforts, it loses much of its effect. It is true that responses from individuals are also often demanded. Yet it is mainly the teacher who is demanding. Whenever the effort was made to let the students take over in conducting an informal conversation among themselves, it was rarely successful.

In the few instances where stimulated conversations between students was observed, the teacher had first drilled the class in speech patterns belonging to a certain topic, such as "clock time", "weather", "meals"; then practiced the pronunciation of additional vocabulary which was already written on the blackboard, and finally let the students formulate their own questions and answers, which were always, of course, corrected immediately by the teacher. This type of practice is the beginning of real conversation and could be started fairly soon.

Another more advanced method to achieve a general discussion was used in the following way. The teacher called a student before the class to read a narrative composed at home by the student. The individual students then asked questions about the theme presented to them by their fellow student.

In both instances the teacher had momentarily ceased his directing. The students were not

responding to stereotype demands but tried to use the patterns which they had learned, which after all, is the real purpose of pattern practice.

A welcome and amusing change for a language class is the replacement of the teacher as drill leader by one of the students. Here the individual must exert himself and will be prompted to do his best, because the teacher and the whole class will notice and immediately correct his blunders.

<u>The audiolingual method can and must be used to stimulate the individual to converse in the language as soon and as often as possible.</u>

c. The method may lead to a general understanding of the FL but it does not assure an exact knowledge of the meaning of words and the structure of the language.

The traditional approach did not only demand a good portion of the class time for detailed explanations of grammatical constructions in English, it also leaned heavily on translation from the FL into English and vice versa. The result was - and still is in too many classes - that English was dominating in foreign language instruction, as much as half of the precious time reserved for the study of an FL was wasted on translation exercises from one language into the other. The double aim was to ascertain exact meanings and to apply grammatical rules in the correct way.

At first thought, translation seems to be indispensable for students who do not grow up in a bilingual or multilingual environment and whose experience with the FL is restricted to class instruction. Not all real life situations and only basic speech patterns can be presented and practiced in FL classes, no matter how long the program. But two-way translations usually result in creating an artificial language both ways: stilted and unnatural English by translating the FL idioms verbatim, and a "school" French, German, Spanish, etc. which is far removed from the living language. A good translation requires a mastery of both languages which can be gained only after extended study and experience.

This does not mean that conversational phrases could not be translated successfully at an early stage of FL study. Indeed, this type of translation is commonly used to test the understanding of the FL. In some classes observed it was definitely carried too far: the dialog and pattern practice in the FL became a translation exercise which interrupted the

learning process.

However, meanings must be clear to the student learning a FL. Otherwise, the audiolingual method will produce a large number of FL illiterates. The skillful teacher will know when to ask for a clarification of the meaning of a phrase or word in the FL. If possible, this clarification should be given in the FL and only in English, if absolutely necessary.

There is no excuse for the student exposed to the audiolingual method not to know exact meanings. All truly audiolingual textbooks offer English translation of dialogs, vocabularies arranged alphabetically, and English explanations of the FL structure. The teacher must make sure that he does not assume too much understanding of meanings on the one hand, and on the other he should curb his tendency to use English translations and explanations as time-saving devices.

d. FL instruction needs to make better use of laboratories available and technical aids in the classroom.

This point was discussed on page 23 with reference to Table 20. The following suggestions might be made.

1. In order to assure full use of the language laboratory, the school administration should place the most suitable FL teacher in charge of it.

2. Besides regular practice hours for all classes, lab schedules should also provide additional hours to be used optionally by interested students and teachers.

3. Student help may be employed to assist in the operation of the lab.

4. The language clubs may be stimulated to arrange special lab programs and to carry out special lab projects.

5. The lab library of tapes and records should be enlarged to include cultural material for advanced classes.

6. The significance of a language laboratory for FL instruction should be placed in the right perspective to the public by means of public demonstrations, P-TA programs, newspaper articles.

7. Teachers should make more use of teaching aids. Nearly all classrooms visited were equipped with a tape recorder, a record player and a set of practice tapes. From his forty-two visits the observer recalls only four instances when the tape recorder was used

for class drill and two occasions of listening to a song from a record. It is possible that he may have visited classes at the wrong time and that mechanical aids are used more often. The obvious advantages of using this equipment are firstly, that the teacher may rest his voice, a great necessity for a language teacher who has to use his voice almost incessantly in five or more classes a day, and secondly, that the students hear the language spoken by native speakers from commercial tapes.

e. The audio-lingual method fails to prepare H.S. students adequately for FL courses in college.

The fact that more than half of the students entering the university with two years of an FL from H.S. does not continue with their FL (see p. 12, Table 8) is not entirely due to the audiolingual instruction. Not all of these students were trained by this method and most of those who successfully continued (see p. 14, Table 10) came from audiolingually orientated H.S. classes.

As stated before, the waste of FL instruction in high school is mainly due to the short two-year program still generally in existence. Since it will be continued for various reasons for some years to come, a strengthening of the program might reduce the number of FL "drop-outs" and help the others over some difficulties in second-year college FL classes.

The following suggestions are offered to achieve this effect. <u>They concern, of course, the two-year program only.</u>

1. College-bound students should be advised to take the FL in their junior and senior high school years.

2. Wherever possible, the school might set up honor sections in foreign languages for linguistically talented students.

3. The honor sections may prefer to use a modern college text instead of the A-LM now used in local schools.

4. Since the scope of the second level A-LM (second year H.S.) falls short of that of the first-year FL college course in vocabulary, reading, writing, and structural analysis, additional material must be used to prepare the college-bound student better for the second-year college course. The University FL Department should be willing to suggest

suitable supplementary materials.

5. The increase in material to be covered would necessitate an accelerated tempo in these high school FL classes. It is assumed that most of the students in such classes are college-bound juniors and seniors. For them, the program may be tightened. Not all pattern practices in the A-LM texts are of equal importance. Some may even be skipped, others held to a minimum.

These older students should be made responsible for a larger portion of home work and self study than has been the case heretofore. A good amount of outside reading and writing assignments will force them into good study habits and prepare them better for college work.

At this age they should be made to realize that a good deal of learning must take place outside the classroom and that their teachers can only guide them in their own efforts. The criticism by students and educators that the audiolingual method in FL classes does not challenge the intelligent student enough, will then be without basis.

VI

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO, NEVADA.

The last chapter of this report will discuss the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of Nevada, Reno Campus, as it appeared in Fall, 1964. For the sake of brevity, data on enrollment and the distribution of students in various aspects are presented in Appendix D, Tables 22-35.

Although these data will be subject to change from year to year, it may be assumed that the percentages of Nevada and Washoe County students in the total enrollment will remain fairly constant. Two significant facts can be learned from Table 35: first, that nearly two-thirds of the students come from Nevada, and second, that one-third of the total FL enrollment comes from Washoe County schools. These figures place the University FL Department in an important position within the Nevada and Washoe County FL programs.

For FL students from Washoe County, the University Department is even of more importance than it is for the rest of the state because of its location in the district and because one-half of the FL teachers in Washoe County received their language instruction there. In addition, one-fourth of the local FL teachers were trained in NDEA Summer Language Institutes conducted by the Department on the Reno Campus.

In spite of this close interrelation between the local schools and the University in respect to the FL program, little cooperation exists between them. The author sincerely hopes that his view of the local FL program, which always included the University Department, might help to bring about mutual understanding of problems existing and cordial cooperation in solving them.

In the Fall semester of 1964, the ten staff members of the department instructed 776 students in six languages; French, German, Italian, Latin, Russian and Spanish (see Tables 23-32, Appendix D). They taught a total of 38 classes, which means that the average number of individual classes per instructor was four. This average teaching load is high for university conditions, especially when it is noted that advanced and even graduate courses, which require a great deal of preparation and research, are included.

It should also be pointed out that in the lower division the average class size was con-

sidersibly larger in the University than it was in the local high schools; 25.6 against 19.3 and 19.5 (see Table 31, Appendix D and Tables 3 and 4, p.7).

With the author included, five members of the staff have a Ph.D. and three are working for this degree. The remaining three have a M. A. Besides, five are native speakers and nearly all of the others approach native ability in the languages which they are teaching. Most of them are multilingual.

The Department offers major programs in French, German and Spanish. In Italian, Latin, and Russian, only two-year programs are available as yet. Graduate courses in the three major languages leading to a master's degree have been carefully outlined, but only a few can be offered each semester and none during the summer.

Since Summer, 1961, the Department has taken an active part in the national FL program by conducting NDEA Summer Language Institutes for secondary teachers of French and Spanish. The first two were directed by the author[1] and the following two by Dr. Charles V. Wells, Chairman of the Department, who will conduct his third institute for teachers of French this summer. Several staff members and teachers of local schools, as well, have been teaching at these institutes. By the end of this summer, well over two hundred teachers of French and Spanish will have received institute training at the University of Nevada, in Reno.

Instructing future FL teachers throughout the academic year has been one of the major functions of the Department for a long time. A course in the methods of teaching foreign languages under the auspices of the College of Education has been conducted by a staff member of the FL Department for some years. Supervision of student teachers in foreign languages is, however, still handled by the College of Education. The paucity of graduate course offerings dictated by lack of staff has unfortunately hampered the Department in its efforts to continue the education and training of its graduates who are now FL teachers.

The Department operates two language laboratories, each accommodating thirty students under ideal conditions, which cannot always be maintained due to mechanical failures. Yet every beginner in a modern language is scheduled to spend two hours a week in the lab, one hour for group practice and the other for individual practice. Attendance records are strictly kept

[1] Mr. Marvin J. Roth, now coordinator of jr. and sr. high schools was his associate director in both.

by student lab assistants and instructors. Second-year and advanced classes also have opportunities to use the laboratories.

In the first and second year of modern languages, audiolingual texts are generally used, although the audiolingual approach is consistently practiced only by an estimated one-third of the instructors. It is the author's candid opinion that many of the observations in the preceding chapter on the method are not only valid for high school teachers, but for college instructors as well.

As a former chairman of the department and as a senior member of twenty-four years' service, the author fully realizes that college instructors are the most independent and individualistic members of the teaching profession. These qualities are to be appreciated by advanced students who need to be exposed to different approaches, stimulated by a variety of ideas, and forced to deal with the challenge thrust toward them by different personalities. The beginner, however, should feel that his language instruction is carried out systematically and evenly in all classes so that a change from one section to another necessitated by the change in his schedule from one semester to the next does not hamper his progress. In the same way, the freshman entering the University with an FL preparation of several years should feel confident that his continuation in an FL college class is not made difficult by arbitrary standards and wilful procedures of individual instructors.

The department should be aware of its role within the national FL program and the local program as well. The following suggestions are intended to alert the department to that effect.

1. The rule that a student may fulfill his FL requirement in the College of Arts and Science by taking one year each in two languages should be rescinded. Since the high school student should be advised against the insufficient two-year FL program, the college student should be required to take four semesters in one language to assure fair proficiency in it and not a nodding acquaintance with two. In the interest of better language learning, the department should bring this point to the attention of the faculty of the College of Arts and Science.

2. The department should institute a series of meetings in which aims and methods for first and second-year courses, also courses in composition and conversation and surveys of

literatures are discussed and agreed upon.

3. The department should urge its members to observe class instruction in foreign languages on all levels, from the seventh grade in Junior H.S. to all college classes, whenever possible. A new and exciting feature of the NDEA language institutes was the opportunity for any staff member to visit any class taught at the institute. Since method and demonstration classes in the institutes were conducted by highly qualified high school teachers, the academic institute staff was able to observe FL teaching in the schools at its best and profited greatly from it, as did the teachers from visiting the more academic classes. This is the most desirable kind of cooperation among FL teachers of all levels.

4. The larger number of the majors and minors in the department intend to teach foreign languages. Their knowledge of and experience in the language is chiefly derived from class work. The more they hear, the more they practice the FL in their classes, the better their preparation for teaching it.

Let it be resolved that the use of the English language is reduced to a bare minimum in all classes of the department, except in courses in linguistics and philology which might also be taken by students from other departments.

5. To promote an adequate graduate program, which the department has actually worked out but cannot implement, the University Administration should be asked to provide teaching assistants for the department to release qualified staff members from teaching beginning courses so that they may offer more advanced and graduate courses. These graduate assistants should be subjected to careful training for and supervision in their teaching beginning language classes by experienced staff members. No effective graduate program can be started in the department without the help of teaching assistants.

6. Whenever possible, advanced and graduate courses dealing with oral and written practice, linguistics and structural review in the three major foreign languages should be offered in late afternoon or evening hours for the benefit of local FL teachers.

7. The attempt should be made to offer advanced and graduate courses in foreign languages on the Reno Campus during the summer.

8. As soon as practical, the Italian and Russian programs should be expanded.

9. Student teachers in foreign languages should be supervised by a language specialist. The department should collaborate with the College of Education in determining whether a member of its own staff or of the staff in Education would be the most suitable for this job. At any rate, this supervisor should have experience in teaching modern foreign languages according to modern techniques. Preferably, he should have taught in a NDEA language institute.

10. The department should insist that certification of language teachers be partly based on an acceptable degree of proficiency in foreign languages. Major and minor students intending to teach languages should be made aware of this fact early during their time of preparation. The degree of proficiency may be determined by administering national tests developed by the MLA for the four basic language skills.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
RENO, NEVADA

Qu. A

FALL, 1964

NEVADA SURVEY OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAM

NOTE: Your courtesy in answering the following questions will be greatly appreciated. Please use the reverse side for longer comments. C. W. F. Melz

---

Name _____ Class _____ Major _____

Language _____ Course _____ Sec. _____ Instructor _____

1. Name and locality of your high school _____

2. Languages studied in H.S. Give years of study for each.

3. Was the audiolingual method used in your school?

4. Did your school have a language laboratory?

5. If so, how much lab practice did you have per week?

6. If not, what mechanical aids were used in language classes?

7. Did you continue your high school language in college?

8. If so, did you encounter difficulties in taking an advanced college language course? Please explain.

9. If you did not continue with your high school language in college, give reasons for it.

10. How would you rate your language instruction in high school? Was it excellent, good, fair, poor? Please underline the appropriate term and comment on your rating.

11. Have you traveled or resided abroad? Where and for how long?

12. Do you speak a foreign language at your home and/or do you hear it spoken?

APPENDIX B

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

December 4, 1964

TO:

FROM: Marvin J. Roth

Please complete the following questionnaire and return to Mr. Roth at your earliest convenience. This information is being gathered for a research project being conducted by Dr. Melz. Dr. Melz, of course, will use only total figures, not individual cases.

1. How many years have you been teaching? (Including this year) _____

2. How many years have you taught foreign languages? (Including this year) _____

3. How many semester hours do you have in each language? (Including institutes)

Language	Undergrad. Hrs.	Grad. Hrs.

4. How many months have you either travelled, lived or studied abroad?

Country	Number of Months

5. Institutes you have attended:

Institution	Language	Year

6. Do you plan to apply for an institute for the summer of 1965? Yes _____ No _____

APPENDIX C

Selected and classified comments from college students (see Appendix A) concerning their H.S. instruction in FLs.

1. Method

My chief difficulty was the change in stress. In high school, speaking ability, not grammar, was emphasized. In college I found the cpposite was true. Now I flounder with rules and tenses I really never noticed before.

Spent too much time learning dialogues and never learned the fundamental rules.

I feel that the audiolingual method taught in high school doesn't prepare a student for the grammatical usages which one would encounter in the college course. (I would have failed French)

Our instructor believed in teaching conversational French and because I knew so little grammar I feel I would flunk a 200 course (2nd year college).

The study was centered around grammar and verb conjugation and not much practical usage.

I learned the language very fast and enjoyed the way in which it was taught. All of the students were carrying on conversations in French by the end of two years.

It involved mostly the memorizing of vocabulary lists with little grammar or practice in speaking. The tests were 95% vocabulary.

I believe that it is much better to learn the grammar, vocabulary, etc., and then learn how to speak than to learn to speak and not know what you are saying as retention is very poor in this method!!

Not enough interstudent conversation in that language class.

Not enough stress was placed on translation to give the course any real value.

Good concentration on vocabulary and pronunciation but not so much on usage.

Our instructor taught grammar and vocabulary of Spanish and really pounded it into us, but there was not much speech practice or listening and comprehending.

We only memorized dialogues which gave very little fundamentals of the language and little speaking ability.

Teacher spent very little time on speaking: all emphasis was on writing.

I found difficulty in the change from the traditional method to the contemporary method. I also had trouble with one teacher teaching Castilian and another South American Spanish.

In the 9th grade - poor - I learned many things which I later learned were wrong. In high school, generally FAIR, with the exception of 3rd year French from Miss ---- which was excellent, as we read literature and much study was required. I learned grammar very well, but still cannot <u>speak</u> French as fluently as I feel I should.

The courses were all grammar.

I noticed that the ALM method of mainly speaking presents a certain amount of difficulty with the grammar taught in college. This I observed, however, not from my own experience, but from that of my fellow students.

The 101 & 102 courses in language at the university are taught much in the same manner as I was taught in my last two years of high school, but I wasn't prepared adequately in high school for the great amount of Spanish grammar I encountered here. We went into grammar very little in high school.

Grammar was lacking since there was so much emphasis on spoken Spanish. Today I would not be able to make up my own sentences but I could read with good accent.

Not enough emphasis was put on becoming familiar with the language, rather, it was repeating basic sentences and changing them according to grammatical rules and not understanding the words. It was too mechanical.

I had two different instructors for two different years and both taught completely different. The first one taught the old way; the second one taught the new way.

I have no confidence in <u>speaking</u> and I will not find the elementary conversation practice that I need in a college course.

The instruction was fair - my first year was very poor and I received a poor foundation in my first year - and enccuntered considerable difficulty in writing the language.

No real difficulties. ALM was very helpful and complete.

The audiolingual method is much easier (than the grammatical). You never learn much grammar, and can achieve good grades without effort.

The ccurse wasn't challenging enough for college bound students.

Not enough practical application. Also we talked in lab but did <u>not know</u> what we were saying.

I got good grades in Spanish, but didn't put forth any effort and did not know my Spanish well.

My Spanish instruction was <u>fair</u>. My German instruction was <u>good</u> except that all we learned was pronunciation and not grammar.

I felt the instructor was excellent but I also felt that the ALM program did not teach the student any grammar or very little vocabulary.

My background was too far behind me and too limited. I needed help with verbs and vocabulary. Studying mostly grammar and little conversation makes me inept at speaking and understanding.

I didn't care for fourth year French because we never did anything, and I lost interest in French.

There was 1 instructor teaching 7 courses a day. There was no practice for speaking in the other language of German. Interest in the field of language was not inspired among the students.

The language instruction was fair, but the audiolingual was new and the instructors had to learn also how to teach it.

My background in Spanish in high school was good so the college courses were not difficult; in fact, I didn't feel they were challenging enough.

I didn't learn the grammatical part of Spanish well enough to take advanced Spanish. Also, I wanted to learn a new language.

Not enough study required.

I seem to have a good background for this 203 course. After 2 years of high school French I was convinced I hadn't learned a thing, but this apparently is not the case.

I had been used to audiolingual where French was spoken but not seen. There was little grammar studied. So when I came to college I had no background for the written course.

My teachers knew even less about the method of teaching than I did. Both knew nothing about the French language and therefore were unable to teach adequately. Therefore I know nothing about what I'm doing now.

The entire concentration on audiolingual in high school left me unprepared for any drill in written grammar.

I did not know anything about verb conjugation or past tenses. Also many words I know for speaking but not for writing.

I feel my accent could not be better. I am fully in favor of audiolingual but it must be continued to do any good.

The so-called ALM method is a farce and an insult to intelligence. Through this approach, modern educators seem to think it is more important to be able to order butter than understand the language.

My 2 years of ALM material constitutes less than a year of college material I am sure. I have purchased a first year book and am trying to catch up on my own. The biggest problem is grammar, both in terms and practice, and the use of various prepositions. I have difficulty in choosing the correct preposition to use. The pronunciation aspect of ALM is excellent; however it should be supplemented in high school (2nd year) by a first year German college-level book.

Much of the sentence structures, the dative case and vocabulary was not stressed or even covered at all in German.

Some of the fundamentals were learned and pronunciation but not enough grammar or vocabulary.

The high school ALM method did not adequately prepare me to cope with college German - vocabulary is small and lack of grammatical knowledge.

2. <u>Teacher</u>

I felt the teacher due to her travels in other countries, to the class was more interesting, but she herself was too easy on grading.

The particular instructor would have been better if he hadn't been so "easy going".

He was not extremely helpful. He merely read to us from the text.

The teacher was dull, the lessons too simple, and discipline in the class was non-existent.

Although I received very high grades in Spanish, my teachers were very lax and I do not feel I know enough about Spanish to take an advanced college course.

Freshman French I took in junior high school. We were not made to do anything. The teacher talked about his war experiences.

Exceptionally smart teachers but they had poor teaching methods - not strict enough.

For both teachers it was their first year teaching and they weren't too sure what they were doing. In second year we tried the audiolingual method for awhile and then changed back to the book method, so we only got through 1st year grammar.

Under Mrs. --- the language instruction was excellent. We learned about all phases of life in Spain. We learned songs and poems. In addition to going along with the book, our class had informal conversations in Spanish, gave speeches in Spanish, and discussed the history of Spain. We saw slides she had taken in Spain. She was an inspiration to me, and because of her classes, I have decided to major in Spanish. My most enjoyable high school experiences were in her class.

The teachers were well qualified, but some couldn't manage the class making it difficult for some to learn.

The teacher was good, but didn't work us hard enough.

My teacher was more interested in the athletic department than Spanish. He did not make us work enough, especially in the second year.

My Spanish teacher had lived in Spain and Mexico, she could speak the language like a native. She coupled her teaching with stories and culture periods.

I enjoyed the class because the teacher did not limit himself to strict grammar instruction - he talked about culture and ideas. However, I don't believe I really got a strong background.

I didn't feel that she had very good control over her class. She seemed to know the language fairly well, but didn't get it across to her students.

I had much difficulty learning Spanish because the teachers teaching it had probably never heard any real natives speak and had some difficulty in doing so themselves.

I did not feel that my teacher had any real interest in teaching.

It was mainly verbs, singular words, and translation.

Fair, she did not take time to let the individual understand what was happening. She made learning Spanish an unliked task instead of an enjoying one.

3. Teacher-student relation

There was too much emphasis on the ALM method and not enough teacher-student relationship.

I believe it was much less personal than college courses and had little individual stimulus and help.

All tests were oral and they weren't very important as to our final grade. He showed very little interest. The students were bored and lost during the greatest part of the two years. We were never taught rules or standard ideas to go on in learning the language.

Too much emphasis was placed on the ALM method and not enough on student-teacher relationship.

The instructor did not take any personal interest in the student, but only taught the course as one unit. If one student was behind, he couldn't receive special help.

4. Tempo

There wasn't enough oral work. The last year our class as a whole did not accomplish much; we didn't seem to progress.

Very slow. Time wasted.

I could not continue because I didn't have enough background to do the work sufficiently. In two years we barely covered one year's course of study.

I felt that the instruction was good but could have been improved by moving faster along.

I learned very little in high school.

I find that college languages are more difficult because they go much faster. I also find that I am learning much more now in college.

The Spanish was fair, we went very slowly and didn't learn rapidly. It was often boring. Part of this may be due to the fact that many students took Spanish because it was supposedly easy. They didn't work too hard.

The German was very good. We went at a faster rate and had a better class. The teacher was more interesting.

In college quantity rather than quality is the apparent goal and I felt that it was hard to adjust to the rapid speed of learning so much.

5. Laboratory

Good instructor, but no laboratory and not many other aids.

The language lab was not used enough, and not enough conversational Spanish spoken.

APPENDIX D

Table 22

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENROLLMENT IN THE TOTAL ENROLLMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO, FALL, 1964.

No. of regular full-time students on the Reno Campus	Foreign Language Students (see Tables 31 & 32)	FL Enrollment per cent of Total
3,557	776	21.8%

Table 23

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN INDIVIDUAL LANGUAGES AND THE PERCENTAGES THEY REPRESENT OF THE TOTAL FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENROLLMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO, FALL, 1964.

Language	No. of Students	Per Cent of Total
French	235	30.2
German	187	24.-
Italian	55	7.-
Latin	30	3.9
Russian	21	2.7
Spanish	248	31.9

Table 24

DISTRIBUTION OF FL STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO, FALL, 1964, ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE AND CLASS IN COLLEGE.

Language	Freshmen	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Grad.	Spec.	Total
French	83	54	40	19	7	4	207
German	57	46	28	16	7	6	160
Italian	16	14	10	4		2	46
Latin	10	9	1	1	1		22
Russian	8	3	7	1	2	6	27
Spanish	78	58	36	21	1	4	198
TOTAL	249	179	135	56	16	23	660

Table 25

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS IN FRENCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, FALL, 1964, ACCORDING TO CLASS AND YEAR OF STUDY.

Class	First Year	Second Year	Third & Fourth Year	Total
Freshmen	44	35	4	83
Sophomore	29	15	10	54
Junior	8	11	21	40
Senior	7	4	8	19
Graduate	3	1	3	7
Special	2	2		4
Total	93	68	46	207

Table 26

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS IN GERMAN ACCORDING TO CLASS AND YEAR OF STUDY.

Freshmen	49	8		57
Sophomore	36	6	4	46
Junior	18	7	3	28
Senior	4	3	9	16
Graduate	2	2	3	7
Special	6			6
Total	115	26	19	160

Table 27

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS IN ITALIAN ACCORDING TO CLASS AND YEAR OF STUDY.

Freshmen	10			10
Sophomore	7	2		9
Junior	1			1
Senior		1		1
Graduate	1			1
Total	19	3		22

Table 28

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS IN LATIN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, FALL, 1964, ACCORDING TO CLASS AND YEAR OF STUDY.

Class	First Year	Second Year	Third & Fourth Year	Total
Freshmen	10			10
Sophomore	7	2		9
Junior	1			1
Senior		1		1
Graduate	1			1
Total	19	3		22

Table 29

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS IN RUSSIAN ACCORDING TO CLASS AND YEAR OF STUDY.

Freshmen	8			8
Sophomore	2	1		3
Junior	6	1		7
Senior		1		1
Graduate	1	1		2
Special	6			6
Total	23	4		27

Table 30

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS IN SPANISH ACCORDING TO CLASS AND YEAR OF STUDY.

Freshmen	31	39	8	78
Sophomore	30	20	8	58
Junior	14	12	10	36
Senior	4	6	11	21
Graduate			1	1
Special	4			4
Total	84	77	38	198

Table 31

ENROLLMENT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO, FALL, 1964, IN THE LOWER DIVISION

Language	First Year (equivalent to H.S. 1st & 2nd yr.)	Second Year (equivalent to H.S. 3rd & 4th yr.)	Total	No. Classes	Average Class Size
French	103	76	179	7	25.6
German	115	32	147	5	29.4
Italian	43	11	54	2	27.-
Latin	24	6	30	2	15.-
Russian	14	7	21	2	10.5
Spanish	96	87	183	6	30.5
Total	395	219	614	24	25.6

Table 32

ENROLLMENT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO, FALL, 1964, IN UPPER DIVISION AND GRADUATE COURSES

Language	Upper Division (3rd & 4th yr.)	No. of classes	Average Cl. size	Graduate	No. of classes	Average Cl. size
French	56	5	10.6			
German	35	4	8.8	5	1	1
Italian	1*	1	1			
Spanish	61	4	15.3	4	1	1
Total	153	14	10.9	9	2	4.5

*Independent Study: the same for one German and seven students in Spanish in the upper division count.

Table 33

TRAVEL, RESIDENCE, AND STUDY ABROAD OF 660 FL STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, FALL, 1964.

No Travel	2-7 weeks	2-10 months	1-2 years	3-7 years	10 & more years	Total
498 or 75.5%	28	38	46	28	22	660

Total number of students with travel 162 or 24.5%.

Table 34

NUMBER OF FL STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, FALL, 1964, WHO SPEAK OR HEAR A FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPOKEN REGULARLY AT HOME, LISTED BY LANGUAGES.

Basque	10	Chinese	2	Czechoslovak	1	Danish	1	Dutch	4
French	14	Gaelic	1	German	19	Greek	3	Hungarian	1
Italian	38	Islandic	1	Lithuanian	1	Norwegian	1	Polish	3
Portuguese	2	Russian	1	Serbian	4	Spanish	43	Swedish	1
Ukrainian	2	Yiddish	3						

Total 156 or 23.6%

Table 35

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO STATE OF FL STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, FALL, 1964.

Alabama	1	Massachusetts	2	Ohio	3
Arizona	2	Michigan	1	Oklahoma	1
California	129	Minnesota	1	Oregon	4
Colorado	5	Mississippi	1	Pennsylvania	3
Connecticut	1	Missouri	4	Rhode Island	1
Florida	1	Montana	3	Tennessee	3
Hawaii	1	Nebraska	1	Texas	4
Idaho	7	Nevada	425¥	Utah	6
Illinois	3	New Jersey	3	Virginia	3
Iowa	1	New Mexico	3	Washington	3
Kentucky	1	New York	10	West Virginia	1
Louisiana	2	North Dakota	1	Wisconsin	1
				Wyoming	1

FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Canada	1	Japan	1
Cuba	1	Mexico	1
England	2	Netherlands	1
Formosa	2	Norway	1
France	2	Poland	1
Ireland	1	Switzerland	1
Israel	1	Venezuela	1

¥ 219 or one-third of the total FL enrollment come from Washoe County public schools.